

checks and balances designed to protect the rights of the American people.

This President's abuse of signing statements is all the more dangerous because he has packed the courts with judges willing to defer to him and presidential authority. I have noted that Justice Alito helped develop this device. I could not help but note that Justice Scalia, who is famous for not consulting legislative history, reached out in his dissent in the recent Hamdan decision to reference a recent Presidential signing statement.

These signing statements are a diabolical device but this President will continue to use and abuse them, if the Republican Congress lets him. So far, this Congress has done exactly that. Whether it is torture, warrantless eavesdropping on American citizens, or the unlawful detention of military prisoners, this Republican-led Congress has been willing to turn a blind eye and rubberstamp the questionable actions of this administration, regardless of the consequences to our Constitution or civil liberties.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support for the Voting Rights Act, VRA. Unfortunately a longstanding medical appointment kept me from casting my vote in favor of this legislation last week and I want there to be no question as to my support for the VRA. For over 50 years, the VRA has protected the cornerstone of democracy: the right to vote. Congress enacted the VRA in response to evidence that some States and counties had denied many citizens access to the ballot because of their race, ethnicity, and language-minority status. The creators of this law were convinced, as am I, that a strong America is one that reflects the feelings and opinions of all Americans. That means that everyone has the right to vote.

Provisions of the VRA prohibit election laws that would deny or abridge voting rights based on race, color, or membership in a language minority. The act allows citizens to challenge discriminatory voting practices and procedures and prohibits the use of any test or device as a condition of voter registration. Such provisions seem like common sense today, but they were not always so widely supported. We must recommit today not to return to the mistakes of yesterday. I am pleased that the Senate approved the reauthorization of this critical act. It correctly ensures that every citizen has a stake and a voice in our country's future.

INSTABILITY IN SOMALIA

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I am deeply troubled by reports in the press that the Islamic courts in Somalia are advancing on the internationally recognized Transitional Federal Government, TFG, and are apparently ignoring recently signed cease-fire agree-

ments. It is imperative that the Islamic courts recognize the TFG as the official governing body of Somalia and that it abide by the cease fire agreed to on June 22, 2006, in Khartoum. The Islamic courts must work in good faith to strengthen the TFG and actively commit to the development of a more inclusive and representative government of Somalia.

For this to happen, the international community, including the United States, needs to be fully engaged. The United States, in particular, must develop a comprehensive strategy for Somalia that utilizes all facets of its power and capabilities and must ramp up its diplomatic efforts throughout the region and the international community to bring this crisis to an end. Unfortunately, it can't do that if it doesn't have the resources or the people in place to deal effectively with the complexity of this problem. The U.S. Government needs to appoint a senior envoy for Somalia to pull together a strategy and to engage full time with international and regional partners in addressing this crisis. It also needs more staff and more resources to work with to help execute this strategy and to contribute to international efforts to bring about lasting peace throughout the region. The administration should work closely with Congress to identify what additional resources are needed for Somalia, given the recent escalation of tension there.

That said, it is important to realize that efforts to both establish long-term peace and to eradicate terrorist networks and safe havens in Somalia are complimentary. The U.S. Government must recognize that long-term stability in Somalia is our best weapon against terrorist networks, extremist organizations, and the conditions that allow them to seek safe haven there. We must look at poverty reduction programs, economic development efforts, support for democratic institutions, anticorruption efforts, and education as the core elements of a new Somalia strategy.

As we learned in Afghanistan, we cannot ignore the conditions that breed extremist and terrorist organizations. Accordingly, it is essential to recognize that any attempt to address instability in Somalia must address a range of root causes or facilitating conditions: a weak and dysfunctional central government, extreme poverty, corruption, conflict, disease, and drought.

It is imperative that the U.S. Government begin playing a leadership role in helping stabilize Somalia and the region and that it do so immediately. We need a comprehensive approach to engaging with regional actors, the international community, and the U.N. to find a permanent solution to this crisis. Such an approach will contribute to stability throughout the Horn of Africa and to our national security.

NATIONAL KOREAN WAR VETERANS ARMISTICE DAY

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, on Thursday, July 20, 2006, I introduced S. 3700, which would honor the valiant efforts of our Korean war veterans, who risked their lives fighting against communism on the Korean peninsula. As we honor the 53rd anniversary of the Korean War Armistice, I am proud to reintroduce this legislation recognizing Korean War Armistice Day. The Korean War Veterans Recognition Act of 2006 would include National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day among the days when the American flag should especially be displayed. Earlier this year, Representative SUE KELLY reintroduced similar legislation into the House.

National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day is July 27, which recognizes that negotiators signed an armistice agreement at Panmunjom on July 27, 1953. This led to North Korea's withdrawal across the 38th parallel and allowed the Republic of South Korea to be free from attempts to force communism upon its people.

This year, as we commemorate the 53rd anniversary of the signing of the Korean War Armistice, it is important that we take a moment to reflect upon the sacrifices our men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces have made in brave service to our Nation since its inception. I am pleased to introduce this legislation to respectfully honor and pay tribute to the tremendous courage and sacrifice demonstrated by the men and women who served in the Korean war. As U.S. soldiers continue to fight for freedom around the world, we must remember the sacrifice and valor of their brethren who helped protect and promote American values on the Korean peninsula over a half century ago.

CELEBRATE AMERICA CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the five poems, the winner and runner-up entries for the Celebrate America Creative Writing Contest about the contribution of immigrants to America, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

My Mom "THUY"

(By Jasminh Duc Schelkopf)

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF INDIANA 2006
NATIONAL CONTEST GRAND PRIZE WINNER

My mother's name is Thuy. She was born in Saigon, South Vietnam. Her father was a 3-star Lieutenant General for the South Vietnam military and her family had almost everything that you could possibly think of before the civil war of Vietnam. However, when they lost their country, they lost everything. After the war, all they had left was their hope and beliefs.

In 1975, North Vietnam won the war. When my mother was only 12 years old (8th Grade), she and her brother and sister were forced to go to Canada. The rest of her family was

then scattered around the world in places like France, Australia, Canada and the U.S.A. They all had a very tough time there because they had no support and no money as new immigrants.

For 7 years after the war, my mother went to school and worked during the evening to help out my grandfather. My mother attended college for only 2 years because she needed a full time job to support her family. She also went to beauty school, graduated, and worked for the family. Then, having lived in Canada for 10 years, my mother realized there was a better future for her in the U.S.A.—“The Land of Opportunity.” She decided to move to Pennsylvania in 1985.

My mother began hard work at a beauty shop near Philadelphia and she worked hard everyday. Her dreams were to “ONE DAY” create her own salon and reach her many dreams. Due to her talents, she developed many clients and made a lot of friends. She saved as much money as she could and even avoided eating out or going to the movies or doing anything fun that might cost money.

Then her dream of “ONE DAY” had come true when she met my dad, John Bruce Schelkopf. My dad was a very bright young man who was full of energy. With my dad’s knowledge and skills and my mom’s talent, they opened a small beauty salon in Pennsylvania. During this time my Mom also finished her college degree and got her Bachelor’s Degree in Business. My mother also sponsored my grandparents from Canada to the United States. My parents then got married in 1995 to begin a family.

My mother’s dreams came true because she always viewed life as “half of a full glass” and because she found the U.S.A. to truly be the “land of opportunity.” My mother often says to me, “You can do it if you believe in yourself and always try your best.” My mother is only one of the few million Vietnamese immigrants who settled in the United States. But that one particular Vietnamese immigrant is one special immigrant to me as she struggled to overcome many challenges, hard times, and obstacles in her way. She is a special immigrant who I am happy to call “My Mom Thuy.”

WHY I AM GLAD AMERICA IS A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS

(By Arjun Kandaswamy)

FINDLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL—2006 NATIONAL CONTEST RUNNER-UP

Imagine America without pizza and Top Ramen. Imagine America without a booming economy. Imagine a world where everyone wore the same boring style of clothes. That would be reality if America did not have immigrants.

Pizza, tandoori, lasagna, dumplings or tortillas would not be a part of our vocabulary or among our favorite foods if it were not for immigrants. Although we don’t realize it, many foods we have grown to enjoy were greatly influenced by other cultures. For example, Top Ramen is a popular and addicting food. Although it’s an American brand, it was greatly influenced by Manchurian noodles brought over by Chinese immigrants. Despite the fact that Top Ramen has flavors like Cajun chicken it all started with Manchurian noodles. Immigrants not only make our plates colorful and interesting, but also aid our economy in a huge way.

Our economy is flourishing because of one thing. Immigrants. Immigrants do countless things to help our economy. For starters, immigrants fill jobs. Immigrants are willing to take up jobs that others may not want to. They take minimum wage, which is a lot compared to what they earn in their homeland. Immigrants often work harder in the jobs that they take up because they really

want to stay in this country. Because of this keeping a job is important. Wealthier immigrants usually start their own businesses which is sometimes a restaurant serving their customary dishes. In addition in areas such as high-tech a lot of immigrants have started their own companies and created a lot of new jobs. Most importantly, immigrants raise the bar of America by being hard-working and tough competitors.

Since immigrants live in America they pay taxes, property, sales, and income. Property taxes for the land they live on, sales tax for the items they buy and income tax for the amount of money they make. With over 90 percent of America’s population as immigrants, that’s a lot of money the government receives.

Immigrants create or bring new art forms and music that enrich our lives. Be it Jazz, Rap, classical music, or varieties of instrumental music from their native lands. Children of African immigrants founded jazz and Rap. Some of the sports that we could not live without were founded by immigrants, like basketball which is part of the American lifestyle.

Have you ever seen everyone walking around in Levi’s and a t-shirt? Thanks to immigrants we won’t be seeing that. Immigrants add a variety to our closet. Other styles have been Americanized into a popular fashion, like bandanas. Bandanas originated in the Caribbean and are found everywhere in America, from a dog’s neck to a person’s head.

Immigrants have done so many great things for us. They give us a “taste” of the world; they strengthen our economy. America should march on forward and continue the tradition of it’s forefathers of as a land of immigrants envisioned by them.

A NATION OF DIFFERENCE

(By Kimya Khoshnab)

ARROYO VISTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL—2006 NATIONAL CONTEST RUNNER-UP

On the airplane I sat,
As my heart thundered in my chest.
The silent tears falling into my lap.
Why did this have to happen?
And of all the people in the world,
Why me?
Would I be the only one in my school,
To have another language?
I ponder these questions for a while,
And then breathe a deep sigh.
I had left everything in Japan,
And had to start all over again.
A new life, a new me.
I would have to learn how to stay strong.
I think more,
Then my ears begin to pop.
The airplane groans,
As it reaches its final destination,
California,
And my new life has begun.

As my parents and I enter our house,
My hopes rise a bit.
It is pretty but my house in Japan was better.
But my hopes sink farther than ever,
As my father leads us to the back.
I see that we have rented,
The very small two-bedroom house,
With only a kitchen and a bathroom,
Behind that luxurious castle.
I feel jealous,
Then angry.
I had left my room bigger than a classroom,
For this!

As my first day of school approaches,
My stomach is filled with fear and dread.
I absolutely know that no one will like me.
My backpack slung over my shoulders,
My head raised up high,

I try to be optimistic,
But I know optimism will not help in reality.
I slowly enter my classroom,
And make my way toward the teacher.
I quietly say hello.

She looks up and says,
“Oh, hello there!
Why, you must be the new student!
What’s your name?”
I am utterly surprised by her odd accent.
Do all Americans speak this way?
“Toshiko,” I whisper.
“Vell Toshiko welcome to our class!
Class say hello to Toshiko!”
“Hi” the class responded.
“Now Toshiko come sit here next Chieko.”
I was suddenly alert of my surroundings,
Chieko,
Why that was a Japanese name!
Could it be?
I could not find out for sure until recess.
Recess came and I ran over to Chieko,
Asking if she was Japanese,
When she replied yes,
My spirits soared.
I was so happy not to be the only one!
I asked how she felt being the only foreigner,
As she chuckled at my question,
I began to feel confused.
She replied, “What do you mean?
Everyone here is a foreigner!”
I looked around me,
And sure enough,
Nobody was the same.
I suddenly started to laugh,
I thought I looked like a fool,
Braying away like a donkey.
As I finally stopped, Chieko asked me,
Why I was laughing.
I told her my story,
And we have been best friends ever since.
As I reflect upon the past,
I realize that if,
California was not a state of immigrants,
My life probably would have been,
As horrible as I imagined it.
But since it is,
My family and I have been thriving
And we shall honor our freedom,
Forever.

IMMIGRATION, PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

(By Marissa Lynch)

BROWN MIDDLE SCHOOL—2006 NATIONAL CONTEST RUNNER-UP

Last summer, my Grandpa and I visited Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty. As I looked up at her torch against the baby blue sky, my grandpa read aloud the words at the base of the statue:

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to
Breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me

I lift my lamp beside the golden door

He told me that those great words were written by an intelligent lady name Emma Lazarus. We talked about what the words mean. From 1892 to 1954, 12,000,000 people passed through the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island to start a new, better life in America. He told me his family came from three different places so he is called “mixed ancestry”. We talked about why people moved here and what they did when they got here. Many moved here for freedom and peace. We decided that each came with their own stories, hopes and dreams. Once they arrived, they could become anything—doctors, athletes, artists, astronauts, teachers and more!

My other Grandpa told me that his parents came to America at age 19. They moved because of a war in their country, Greece, and

they were driven out by the Turks. They worked at a restaurant in Newark, New Jersey. At Ellis Island, there was a big board with names of people that passed through there. I noticed their name on the wall!

I'm glad our country is full of immigrants because if no one was brave enough to leave family, friends, and their belongings behind, this country would not be as fascinating as it is. Many people call our country a big mixing pot because people all over the world come to live here. The people mix and blend together like food in a mixing pot. Yet, everyone has their own way of life and their own culture. Everyone is a little different. It is good to be different. Everyone stands out in a crowd!

Do you think that immigration is just in history books and doesn't happen any more? If you do, you are wrong. Today, many people still come to America, like me. I was adopted from South America, just like lots of kids. We came to America with our new families! My mom and dad tell me about the exciting day I became an American citizen. A flag was flown over the United States Capitol for me! I have this flag and a certificate which says:

"This is to certify that the accompanying flag was flown over the United States Capitol on August 26, 1998, at the request of the Honorable John Edward Porter, Member of Congress. This flag was flown for Marissa Rose Lynch in celebration of her receiving U.S. citizenship."

When I look at my flag, it makes me proud to be a part of a new generation of immigrants.

WHY I AM GLAD AMERICA IS A COUNTRY OF IMMIGRANTS

(By Esteban Ochoa)

ST. CLEMENT'S PARISH SCHOOL—2006 NATIONAL CONTEST RUNNER-UP

I am glad that the United States of America is a country of immigrants because you never feel lonely; you just have to look into a crowd to find someone with your same background. When you think you are alone and without friends, you just have to look around and you will find a friend.

When I first transferred from Mexico to my current school in Texas, I did not know how to speak English. I felt alone and confused, but before long, I found that many people in my class spoke Spanish, and I soon made many friends, who eventually helped me learn English and do very well in school.

My case is not different from the story of most of the people who have come to this country from other parts of the world. Having millions of people from hundreds of countries, races, religions and economic backgrounds has created a society unlike any other in this planet.

With diversity comes cultural, economic, and spiritual richness. It is evident everywhere you look, in its food, in its music, in its clothing, and in its churches, just to mention a few examples. This Country has served as refuge for many people who came to the U.S.A. looking for opportunities and in many cases after having suffered extreme hardships.

Those are some of the reasons why I like that America is a country of immigrants. Just when you think that you do not fit in, and that you are alone in this cold world, you can still find variety, alternatives and, consequently, hope in the most unexpected situations.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

COLORADO'S BIG THOMPSON FLOOD OF 1976

• Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, today I honor those who lost their lives as well as those who survived Colorado's Big Thompson Flood of 1976.

Thirty years ago, more than 1 foot of rain fell in a matter of hours, causing a flash flood in Big Thompson Canyon. One hundred and forty-four people were killed, and over \$30 million in property damage occurred. We remember those who died in this natural disaster and also the survivors who had to rebuild their lives, working as a community to start over again. Next week, outside of my hometown of Loveland, CO, survivors of this tragedy will gather to commemorate the Big Thompson Flood. Though I cannot be with them in this ceremony, my thoughts and prayers are with them, and I speak on the Senate floor today as a tribute to this special event.

I ask that the following letter, which I wrote for the commemoration ceremony of the Big Thompson Canyon Flood of 1976, be printed in the RECORD.

The material follows:

JULY 31, 2006.

DEAR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF THE VICTIMS OF THE 1976 BIG THOMPSON CANYON FLOOD: I very much wanted to join you today as you gather to remember the 30th Anniversary of one of Colorado's worst natural disasters.

As we look back thirty years, we recall the shock and devastation that took place in this canyon. Joan, myself and our two daughters, who were very young children at the time, will never forget the Big Thompson Flood and the days that followed. We arrived at home just after the flood tore through the canyon and towards Loveland. We were overwhelmed by the destruction we saw as we later viewed the damage.

A number of our friends and clients who lived in the canyon were ravaged by the flash flood and brought their animals to my hospital for care. As the Loveland city health officer at that time, I also remember well the many health issues we faced together as a community. The memories will remain forever with each one of us who experienced this flood or witnessed its devastating effect on so many lives.

Today, we can see the positive results of the communities in the canyon working together to rebuild their lives and their property. Joan's and my thoughts are with you today as we remember the people who lost their lives and the ones who survived and rebuilt.

Today I am entering this letter in the Congressional Record as a tribute to the living and non-living victims of this natural disaster.

Sincerely,

WAYNE ALLARD,
U.S. Senator.●

A TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM OKONIEWSKI

• Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, this spring, William Okoniewski, one of Wilmington's best, passed away after a long career as a photographer. He was known throughout the community as

the guy who shot all the pictures at weddings, high school graduations, communions, and confirmations.

If you had the Okoniewski Studio logo in the corner of a photo, you knew it was quality work. This was before the era of digital cameras, when our standards were different.

A couple of generations of Delawareans came to admire Bill, and his family. He and his wife of 64 years, Cecilia, had six children, and you could find him coaching winning track teams throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

At his funeral, when his son Stephen read a letter, it reminded me of just why we call Bill's generation the "greatest generation."

The letter was from Art Slote, who on January 9, 1945, was one of five people rescued by Bill in the middle of the Battle of Herrlsheim, in France, near the German border.

In the letter, Mr. Slote said how he had searched for Bill for years, contacting the Army, the Red Cross, and every phone book, trying to locate the guy who saved his life. He finally found him in the late 1990s. He wrote:

I frequently ponder over what impels a man to act as your father did. He could have easily scurried to the rear to save his own skin, and nobody would have criticized him. But he didn't. I wonder if you or I would risk our lives in another's behalf. It must be built into your father's character and sense of morality.

Although slow to admit it, your father's personal bravery, his ability to set aside his fears in behalf of his wounded fellow soldiers, his natural compassion for others in trouble, his modesty in never talking to you about it make this a valor and heroic event.

There is a lesson in those words for all of us in this Chamber and for all Americans. Bill Okoniewski embodied everything that is uniquely American. He understood what it meant to be loyal to our country and to respect your fellow Americans.

He, and his generation, set the example. Today, he is the model for the brave men and women in uniform who are performing equally dangerous acts every day in Iraq and Afghanistan.

One day, and hopefully soon, they too will return home not only having served their country in time of war but going on to lead the kind of professional and family life that Bill lived for decades and decades.●

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF DOUGLAS, NORTH DAKOTA

• Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize a community in North Dakota that will be celebrating its 100th anniversary. On August 4, the residents of Douglas will gather to celebrate their community's history and founding.

Douglas was founded in 1906 and was proudly named after the nearby Douglas Creek. The creek's name honored Major Douglas, who was stationed at Fort Stevenson in the 1870s. In 1906, Douglas's post office was established under the stewardship of Arthur C.